



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago Granted \$50K from the Hollister Confidence Project to Support, Affirm, and Engage LGBTQ+ Youth Throughout Illinois**

CHICAGO, IL - Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago today announced it is one of the 2022 recipients of the Hollister Confidence Fund grant program, a 501(c)(3) charity that supports individuals and non-profits working to strengthen confidence and mental wellness in teens. As a recipient, Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) will be granted \$50,000 to support its Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (the Alliance) program in creating safe and affirming spaces with and for LGBTQ+ young people. The announcement comes in celebration of Hollister's World Teen Mental Wellness Day, an annual event held on March 2 that the global teen retailer founded in partnership with the National Day Calendar to dismantle the stigma around teen mental health.

"The vision of LGBTQ+ young people and their allies has always guided the work of Illinois Safe Schools Alliance," said Karen Reitan, President and Chief Executive Officer for Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago. "And right now, they are imagining ways to create safe and affirming environments for themselves. Support from the Hollister Confidence Project will provide opportunities for these young leaders to sharpen their skills, expand their reach and their ranks, and facilitate peer-led Know Your Rights workshops across the state at a time when every news cycle underpins the importance of LGBTQ+ solidarity and advocacy. This workshop series – which lives in our training portfolio alongside professional development offerings for teachers, school administrators, and youth service providers – ensures young people have the tools and talking points they need to advocate for themselves."

"We have the unique opportunity of being there for our customers during truly formative times in their lives, and we know mental health is a huge part of that journey – which is why we're passionate about supporting initiatives that improve teens' well-being," said Kristin Scott, Global Brand President at Abercrombie & Fitch Co. "We are honored to give back to these organizations and projects through the Hollister Confidence Project, and to support those who are working to champion these causes day in and day out within our communities."

The Hollister Confidence Fund is part of The Hollister Confidence Project, a year-round, worldwide initiative dedicated to helping teens feel their most comfortable, confident and capable. This year's grant recipients were selected by The Hollister Confidence Project's advisory board, which consists of mental health experts, educators and Hollister brand representatives. Twenty non-profit organizations and projects nationwide will be given grants totaling \$1 million, all to build further confidence among teens across a variety of communities.

For more information on the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance at PHIMC, visit [ilsafeschools.org](http://ilsafeschools.org), and to learn more about the Hollister Confidence Project, click [here](#).

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*Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC)* enhances the capacity of public health and healthcare systems to promote health equity and expand access to services. The Illinois Safe Schools Alliance is a program of PHIMC which promotes safety, support, and healthy development of LGBTQ+ youth in Illinois schools and communities through advocacy, education, youth organizing, and research.